

Holy Mass: in defence of transubstantiation

TERRY R. LYNCH

Copyright © 2014 Terry Lynch

All rights reserved.

ISBN: 1482691361

ISBN-13: 978-1482691368

DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to all those Christians who suffer persecution for their faith in Christ. They have to gather in secret to participate in the mass, in places like North Korea where it is illegal to be a Christian.

In Somalia it is effectively a death sentence to become known as a Christian, many are being killed in Syria on a daily basis totaling to over a thousand, and in Iraq every two or three days a Christian is kidnapped, abused or killed. (Source: Open Doors UK & Ireland)

CONTENTS

Acknowledgments	i
Protestation	ii
1 Source	1
2 Summit	4
3 Life	8
About the author	18

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The authors and all whom I have quoted

PROTESTATION

The following is a Protestation that was composed by Saint Teresa de Avila to be placed at the beginning of the first printed edition of the “Way of Perfection,” which was issued at Evora soon after her death. I wish to adopt this for my own book, in the habit of prayer and service to God.



“ In all that I may say in this treatise, I submit myself to what is held by our Mother, the holy Roman Church, and if there be in it anything contrary to this, it will be unintentional.

For the love of God, therefore, I beseech the theologians, who are to see the work, very carefully to examine it, and to correct any such faults, with many others that may be found in it of whatever kind.

If there be any good in it, may it be for the glory and honour of God, and for the service of His most holy Mother, our Patroness and our Queen, whose Habit I wear, though utterly unworthy of it. ”

1 SOURCE

Consider that Jesus' first miracle at Cana was to turn water into wine, consider then that our bodies are made of 70% water. Is it beyond the power of the almighty – by his holy spirit- the spirit of Christ that unites the son and the father in agape love – to then turn wine into blood for our consumption as He had instructed us to drink of His Body and Blood. And to do so at our attendance at mass as an outward sign of grace, symbolically in remembrance of Him going to receive His body and blood from the persona Christi at the altar of God. “Work of our hands”, says the Priest, and so it is in our form that Our Lord came to save us and hence why we can only make the bread – from the fields he walked and gathered with the disciples on the Sabbath - and make the wine in the traditional methods rather than the supernatural used by the Son of Man. But, I hear you say “the priest is a man” – yes, he is but the priest has received holy orders and has prior undergone formation and therefore working through the priest who has attained perfect imitation of Christ can transubstantiation occur. As a ransom for the many, the priest has given his life to feed the sheep of God as instructed by Jesus to the servant of the servants of God – the Pope to the parish priest. I hear you cry it is an organisation; no the Church is a living breathing body of the living God – the Pope to paraphrase His Holiness Benedict XVI is to ensure obedience to Christ, just as the head or the brain directs the rest of the body.

In the “Summa Theologica”, Thomas Aquinas states that, while

Christ's body is present in the Eucharist substantially, it is not present as in a place and is perceptible neither to the senses nor to the imagination, but only to the intellect. As the Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI writes in “*Caritas in Veritate*”, “love is rich in intelligence and intelligence is full of love.” Love is humble, kind, patient as St. Paul teaches in Corinthians, the Christian journey is one of love which with the Holy Spirit takes us with Christ to where and who we are meant to be. As Blessed John Henry Cardinal Newman says, we are links in a chain, hearts that speaks to each other in the communion of saints. Together as a community with Christ as our brother, having in humility made small in the Eucharistic host. Saint Bernard asks “what has made you so small?”, the answer is “... love.”

To an outsider the priest may appear to be an alchemist who through magic has created a homunculus, who he holds high and says “behold him who takes away the sins of the world”, a bit like in the Hebrew tradition a donkey that is laden with the woes of the community and sent into the wilderness (like Christ in the Lenten tradition). However, the priest is not an alchemist and he has not created a perfectly formed “little man” but is the vessel to which the priest brings about transubstantiation. Not only transforming the bread and wine into another physical property but actually transferring the very substance to that of the body and blood of Christ to the true presence of the Lord – not symbolic presence in memorandum – but holding what He says is “this is my body...my blood.” He does not say ‘this is like my body’, or ‘this represents my body’.

And how is it made possible that the bread becomes the body of Christ? In the mass, when the priest asks for the blessing upon the gifts, a bell rings that alerts the congregation that something special is going on the bread and wine of our work has become consecrated to God by the coming down of the Holy Spirit - the same spirit that unites the Father with the Son in the Holy Trinity of agape (divine) love. It is this spirit which transforms the substance of bread and wine into Our Lord’s body and blood just as the Virgin’s womb was filled with the Christ child.

The Lord went up with trumpet blast, and as such will come again in glory. The Gloria in the mass prepares the ground and the bell is symbolic of the arrival of the spirit of God that is, where we are gathered – two or more – in the midst of us is Him, united in a spirit of love and

Holy Mass: In defence of Transubstantiation

intellect. As we fully engaged in the Eucharistic celebration come forth to receive the Lord in a state of sanctified grace. If you listen carefully to the words of the Liturgy one will soon come to a loving understanding through our intellect of what the Eucharist is.

2 SUMMIT

As the summit of Christian life, the Eucharist is somewhat the target of mockery. The artist Michael Craig-Martin presented a piece of work entitled 'An Oak Tree' in 1973 that perhaps best explains how people think transubstantiation actually works. Despite 'An Oak Tree' consisting of nothing more than a glass of water, the artist declared that it was actually a full grown oak tree. The artist explained: "it's not a symbol. I have changed the physical substance of the glass of water into that of an oak tree. I didn't change its appearance. The actual oak tree is physically present, but in the form of a glass of water." So now that's all cleared up, anyone for crackers?

Sam Harris mocked the Eucharist saying, "if you wake up tomorrow morning thinking that saying a few Latin words over your pancakes will turn them into the body of Elvis Presley you have lost your mind. But if you think more or less the same thing about a cracker and the body of Jesus, you're just a Catholic."

Let's explore the Eucharist with a faith and reason as Blessed John Paul II says, "faith and reason are like two wings on which the human spirit rises to the contemplation of truth".

Transubstantiation can be found by the living word of Matthew 26:26-28, Mark 14:22-24 and Luke 22:17-20, where "Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body" and, further on, (from Luke this time) "this do in remembrance of me".

J. R. R. Tolkien said that, “out of the darkness of my life, so much frustrated, I put before you the one great thing to love on earth: the Blessed Sacrament ... There you will find romance, glory, honour, fidelity, and the true way of all your loves upon earth.” (The Letters of J.R.R. Tolkien) Arguably, this greatness demands much to reflect even the most minute of the great beauty of the Body of Our Lord made present in the host of bread. “It became obvious” writes Allen R. Hunt, “why Catholics had built such beautiful cathedrals and churches throughout the world. Not as gathering or meeting places for Christians. But as a home for Jesus Himself in the Blessed Sacrament. Cathedrals house Jesus. Christians merely come and visit Him. The cathedrals and churches architecturally prepare our souls for the beauty of the Eucharist.” (Confessions of a Mega Church Pastor: How I Discovered the Hidden Treasures of the Catholic Church)

Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI shows us how this beauty translates into the liturgy which is manifested in the great and beautiful cathedrals, “beauty, then, is not mere decoration, but rather an essential element of the liturgical action” as the Eucharist demands such beauty as being the purpose of everything beautiful, since the start of time, since the word became flesh and dwelt among us even unto the end of time. The Pope Emeritus explains this further that “since it is an attribute of God himself and his revelation. These considerations should make us realize the care which is needed, if the liturgical action is to reflect its innate splendour.”

This beauty has a deeper meaning, it is not just symbolic, it is not an ornament on a dusty altar, someone once told the Catholic writer Flannery O'Connor that it is more open-minded to think that the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar is a great, wonderful, powerful symbol. Her response was, “if it's only a symbol, to hell with it.”

The Eucharist is not just symbolic, it is as real as you and I, as if we were to meet. The passionist St. Gemma Galgani said, “do grant, oh my God, that when my lips approach Yours to kiss You, I may taste the gall that was given to You; when my shoulders lean against Yours, make me feel Your scourging; when my flesh is united with Yours, in the Holy Eucharist, make me feel Your passion; when my head comes near Yours, make me feel Your thorns; when my heart is close to Yours, make me feel Your spear.”

This shows love, true love, an intellect out of love and rich in love that recognises the Lord God of Hosts in the Eucharist. Venerable Fulton J.

Sheen says that “love craves unity. As the highest peak of love in the human order is the unity of husband and wife in the flesh, so the highest unity in the Divine order is the unity of the soul and Christ in communion.” (Life of Christ).

Pope Francis said that the Holy Spirit makes us capable of this agape (the highest unity in the Divine order) love, of being gifted with the knowledge to recognise the Lord in the Host, to fully love him in his divinity. “The Holy Spirit” says the Pope, “is an inexhaustible well of the life of God in us.”

This spirit comes later after the last supper and the passion of Our Lord in a chronological sense, and forever present in the Christological time of our existence. In fact, no one is allowed to consume the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Our Lord without first being formed and receiving baptism, having removed the habit of original sin, having rejected the world, been stripped and re-clothed in the grace of God, having been consecrated to Him in the world. Much like the prodigal son whom returns having spent and wasted his talents, then having the finest things gifted to him in celebration upon his return. And how can the host be filled with the Spirit of God when it is already present in his living being, Jesus has to suffer, be crucified first and then die to fill the Host with His Spirit just as we must die to self to be filled with the love of God and to bring this love to others.

At the last supper Jesus took the bread and wine in his venerable hands but “why did Our Blessed Lord use bread and wine as the elements of this Memorial?” asks Fulton J. Sheen, was it because they were the first things at hand? “First of all, because no two substances in nature better symbolize unity than bread and wine. As bread is made from a multiplicity of grains of wheat, and wine is made from a multiplicity of grapes, so the many who believe are one in Christ.” Fulton J. Sheen here shows how all are called to the feast, not just the apostles but all disciples whom have been formed.

“Second, no two substances in nature have to suffer more to become what they are than bread and wine. Wheat has to pass through the rigors of winter, be ground beneath the Calvary of a mill, and then subjected to purging fire before it can become bread. Grapes in their turn must be subjected to the Gethsemane of a wine press and have their life crushed from them to become wine. Thus, do they symbolize the Passion and

Holy Mass: In defence of Transubstantiation

Sufferings of Christ, and the condition of Salvation, for Our Lord said unless we die to ourselves we cannot live in Him. A third reason is that there are no two substances in nature which have more traditionally nourished man than bread and wine. In bringing these elements to the altar, men are equivalently bringing themselves. When bread and wine are taken or consumed, they are changed into man's body and blood. But when He took bread and wine, He changed them into Himself.” (Life of Christ).

3 LIFE

In the last chapter we cover the life of the Eucharist in the life of the Christian having covered the source of the Eucharist. How the Christian is formed like the elements of the feast (the bread and wine) as described by Fulton J. Sheen. This explains how in order to find his life, one must lose it and to lose it in Christ means to find it; for you have life in the Eucharist.

In the book the “Seven Secrets of the Eucharist”, Flynn Vinny explains that “the Eucharist is not a thing. It is not a dead object. It is Christ and He is fully alive. Receiving Him with this awareness, we become more fully alive, so that we can say with St. Paul, ‘It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me.’” Showing us how important is the process of initiation to become in love with Christ through His Spirit and to be full of intellect through love of the true presence of Christ in the Eucharistic feast.

We then become One in Christ, a community of brothers and sisters, whom through the Spirit as Pope Francis teaches us enables us to love like the divine. Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger (Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI) in his Book “Images of Hope” explains further how the “Eucharist originates in the love of Jesus Christ, who gave his life for us.”

Ratzinger writes that “In the Eucharist, he evermore shares himself with us; he places himself in our hands. Through the Eucharist he fulfills evermore his promise that from the Cross he will draw us into his open arms. In Christ's embrace we are led to one another. We are taken into the one Christ, and thereby we now also belong reciprocally together. I can no longer consider anyone a stranger who stands in the same contact with Christ.” Revealing the community of believers, that to participate in the mass is to commune (to be with) the entire living community or body of Christ, that we become through our existence images of hope in the world, that through our faith and intellect we tell the world that He lives.

“The Eucharist is the supreme prayer of Jesus and of his Church” said the Pope Emeritus on January 11, 2012, during a general audience “may our celebration of the Eucharist, in obedience to Christ's command, unite us more deeply to his prayer at the Last Supper and enable us, in union with him, to offer our lives ever more fully in sacrifice to the Father.” Therefore, to live is to be in Him and for Him to be in us, ever through Him making the sacrifices for the betterment of the world.

What's in a name? asked Shakespeare, a rose by any other name would smell so sweet. G.K. Chesterton says "the word Eucharist is but a verbal symbol, we might say a vague verbal mask, for something so tremendous that the assertion and denial of it have alike seemed a blasphemy; a blasphemy that has shaken the world with the earthquake of two thousand years" (Christendom in Dublin). There go to the Eucharist, we celebrate with Christ, we participate in His redemptive sacrifice. The world does not understand because it does not have the Spirit, that enables the enlightened intellect to fully comprehend the presence of the divine in unleavened bread.

Francis Cardinal Arinze says "people often come to Mass because they have needs to present before God. This is not wrong" showing us that Jesus does give rest to those who are weary in this great sacrament most holy. "But priority goes to adoration, praise, thanksgiving, and propitiation, not to ourselves and what we need." The Cardinal here, shows us that we must show a great respect, for the real and true presence of God is in the Eucharist and our participatory must be focused fully on the one who perfects our faith, whose sacrifices redeems the world. "It is even more mistaken", continues Cardinal Arinze, "if people come to Mass in order to enjoy the music, to admire the preacher, to show off their talents, or to engage in mutual admiration and affirmation between priest and people. If we are to allow the Holy Eucharist to exert its great power in our Christian vocation and mission, we have to learn to see it first as primarily an act of worship directed toward God." (Celebrating the Holy Eucharist).

Vinny Flynn in her book "Seven Secrets of the Eucharist" continues this theme of the real presence, of the need for focused meditation upon Christ and veneration as described by Cardinal Arinze. "With each reception of Holy Communion, we experience, already here on earth, the same divine activity that we will one day experience in all its fullness in heaven—the divine activity of love eternally taking place within the Trinity." Vinny writes of the true presence is reflective upon earth, as we say in the Our Father, may your will be done as it is in heaven, so too in the Eucharist we are lifted up as in prayer, in the real presence and practice of God. We too therefore, must united our will with that of God, as the Cardinal says and remember as we stand in awe of the Almighty united in, with and through Him in the Eucharistic feast in His majestic Churches.

Christoph Cardinal Schonborn in his book "The Source of Life: Exploring the Mystery of the Eucharist", exerts this need to recognise and fully consume the presence of the Lord "it is good (wherever possible) not to rush out of the church at the end of Mass to get on with one's daily activities" he writes. "The Mass is a tremendous event, and we should pause to let it resonate within us" as we seek refuge in his tent from the desert

outside.

Father Robert Spitzer SJ continues this theme of seeking refuge, rest from the tumultuous desert of life. He writes in his book, the “Five Pillars of the Spiritual Life” that “if it is at all possible, I recommend that everyone, even in the midst of your frenetic activity, find ways to receive the Holy Eucharist during the week.” Revealing the importance of the role the Eucharist plays in our everyday lives he says “it will bring a consolation leading to greater peace, efficacy, and leadership; a transformation toward the heart of Christ beyond our highest expectation; and a unity with the mystical body, which will impart an indelible stab of joy in our present lives and memories.”

The priest by whose hands the mass is made possible, is as much mocked as the Eucharist, especially in today’s scandalous media, priests are constantly attacked. St. John Vianney says “if someone wants to destroy religion, he begins by attacking priests, for wherever there are no more priests, there is no sacrifice, either, and where there is no sacrifice, there is no religion, either.” These words quoted in the YOUCAT under the Pope Emeritus, shows the importance of the Eucharist and the priest in bringing the feast as central to the life of the Christian and detrimental to the Church as without the Eucharist there is no church and vice versa.

Persecution is an ever present danger in the world for the Christian and yet it is this persecution that the importance of the Church’s mission is revealed. Fulton J. Sheen wrote that the end of Christendom has been witnessed, and St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross (Edith Stein) writing in 1939 says “the Savior today looks at us, solemnly probing us, and asks each one of us: Will you remain faithful to the Crucified? Consider carefully! The world is in flames, the battle between Christ and the Antichrist has broken into the open. If you decide for Christ, it could cost you your life.”

In so much as God is love, and therefore love is the essence of the Eucharist, it is what made God so small as St. Bernard teaches and so in persecution it will pass, it will seem fleeting as the Pope Emeritus says “everything in this world will pass away. In eternity only Love will remain.”

There so as the Christ pokes us, in this world ripe with civil wars and conflict, where great injustices occur in the smallest of places an abundance of love resides when God whom gave you live and sustains your life with the Eucharistic gifts, Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger (Pope Emeritus) says in “the only real gift man should give to God is himself.” (The Spirit of the Liturgy)

How fitting therefore that the priest “is not for himself” says St. John Vianney, “he is for you” having sacrificed his life for the multitude, the multitude that like the Eucharistic gifts that Fulton J. Sheen writes off are crushed in Spirit just as Jesus was on the Cross when he said “My God, why have you forsaken me” but delivered it all over the same and therefore that

seed died and bore great fruit in the victory of Christ over death in the celebration, the participation of the Eucharist.

Carl E. Olson writes on the Eucharistic love that binds us as one commune “Chrysostom's faith in the mystery of love that binds believers to Christ and to one another led him to experience profound veneration for the Eucharist, a veneration which he nourished in particular in the celebration of the Divine Liturgy. Indeed, one of the richest forms of the Eastern Liturgy bears his name: “The Divine Liturgy of St John Chrysostom”.

Olson continues on the beauty of the Liturgy “for many people, including many Catholics, the Catholic Church is too old-fashioned, staid, and boring, supposedly failing to be “relevant” and “with the times.” And yet, the ancient traditions and venerable institutions of the Church—especially the papacy—continue to fascinate and even transfix the world at large. And today's events in Rome demonstrate this fact, showing that Catholicism, far from being dull and predictable, is both consistently compelling and often very unpredictable.” (Pope Francis is Exhibit A through Z).

Perhaps this fascination much like at an art gallery explains the persecution in a type of psychological term, like a violent reaction to the beautiful, where one throws paint at a priceless masterpiece and so the persecutor attacks the follower, the imitator of the beautiful. And yet, Christ was not of extensial beauty but of within-a realization that we must not be half of Saint but a whole saint or no saint of all (St Therese of Lisieux). That means to be a saint you must die like the seed, to bear the harvest, to become one following formation like the apostles, with the Christ to become a saint of God. “The mysteries of the communion of saints”, writes Hans Urs Von Balthasar in his book “Life Out of Death”, “are as unfathomable as that of the Eucharist. Everyone belonging to it possesses only in order to give and receives only by giving.” A culmination of the above to become saints, living not only by the Eucharistic bread but fed by the liturgy of the word that accompanies it. Therefore to be Catholic is not to believe that a few words over some bread makes Elvis Presley come back to life as Sam Harris jokes but undergoes a long transitional period of dying to self to a grinding, of one to become grounded in Christ, to become one with Christ fed in both body and spirit, to have the word living within us. In other words, to quote St. Francis of Assisi to “preach the Gospel at all times and if necessary to use words”.

“Once again, I must return to the Eucharist” says the Pope Emeritus, “Because there is one bread, we, though many, are one body’, says Saint Paul.” The Pope Emeritus explains, “by this he means; since we receive the same Lord and he gathers us together and draws us into himself, we ourselves are one.”

We therefore become ready to gather in the harvest and it is essential that

“this must be evident in our lives. It must be seen in our capacity to forgive” to make disciples of the nations. “It must be seen in our sensitivity to the needs of others. It must be seen in our willingness to share. It must be seen in our commitment to our neighbors, both those close at hand and those physically far away, whom we nevertheless consider to be close” just as Jesus dined with tax collectors and spoke with the Samaritan woman (the Samaritan whom was left lying by the roadside and anointed his feet with tears). These words from his book the “Heart of the Christian Life” shows us how our love, not only has the power to transform the unleavened bread into the true body, blood, soul and divinity it has the ability to fully change those around us, how our life can by the Eucharist have the power to bring love to the disenfranchised, the lonely, the poor, the lost souls in the new age as Christ fully alive in the world.

Therefore the Eucharist is much more than just a prayer meeting, or a prayer over bread. Peter Kreeft says, “eating keeps your body alive, and prayer keeps your soul alive” it is an culmination of the journey, a prayer journey but a journey with Christ. With the teacher in the Eucharist we learn the Our Father and dare to pray it, we bring Christ fully alive to our presence as he promised when two or more are gathered in his name there he is, showing the importance of the community, how we truly commune with Christ in the Eucharist. How at the Eucharist St. John Vianney says our bundles of hay as prayer, at the Eucharist, lifts up like incense to the High Altar on heaven where his angels attend to Him. We too bring ourselves as the greatest gift to God, who through the masterpiece in the Sistine Chaptel comes down with the angels and touches our hand, that moment an eternity of praise with the Almighty. How we have used the land, the beauty of creation to invest our talents and to fully understand in love, in our intellect, the symbolic nature of how we gather in the harvest and bring this to the table of the Lord, our Creator God, in His tent.

And at the Eucharist we must remain silent and know that He is God, that He is truly with us, a chance to say thank you for the glory of creation, that all of creation was made for the gathering of the harvest, it is ripe for the picking it is yearning restless for unity with God through the Eucharist.

This calls us to a great reflection, a chance to gather our woes and through Christ’s victory on the Cross crossover to glory, to endure with patience trials and tribulations and as Pope Francis says recently to sustain the Church in them, which we bring and united with Him through the Eucharist make anew. That we may, says the Pope, ripen as the greatest gift we can give for God’s feast. “The chance to savor God’s hidden presence in the Eucharist for the quiet privilege alone” writes Father Donald Haggerty, “leaving behind the noise of streets at an unplanned hour, entering the subdued hush behind a closing church door, kneeling in the shadows before a lit red lamp and the tabernacle.” Father Haggerty in his

book "Contemplative Provocations" writes that this "sudden desire to be near God in an empty church may be an anticipation of deeper longings in prayer." And in this Eucharistic feast, before in silence these deeper longings are examined in the conscience and finding peace in an uplifting commutative experience of the Holy Mass.

Adrienne von Speyr writes in her book "Lumina and New Lumina" that "all too often souls do not linger where the Lord's Incarnation is at its most complete: in their neighbor or in the Eucharist" but if one is fully engulfed in the Eucharist this can be seen in the sign of peace and the recitation of Our Lord's prayer and the beauty of the liturgy of the Eucharist. Where one joins the presence of the sanctuary in the agape love of God this divine love made possible says Pope Francis by the Holy Spirit which lifts us to the summit of Christian life.

Ivan Gobry writes in his biography of St. Francis of Assisi that "every day the Son of God comes to us under humble appearances; every day he descends upon the altar through the hands of the priest." Showing the daily unknown, often overlooked daily sacrifices of the priest. "And just as he revealed himself to the apostles in truly human flesh, so too he reveals himself to us now in the consecrated bread. They, when they looked upon him with their fleshly eyes, saw only his flesh, but because they contemplated him with their spiritual eyes, they believed that he was God." Here Ivan Gobry shows how we must be of the correct disposition and how this has biblical significance as Peter recognized Jesus as the Lord, made known to him by the Spirit, the same that makes the Eucharist possible but also the secret of the papacy and the hierarchy of the Church to whom through the Eucharist we are united. "May we, too, when we see with our fleshly eyes the bread and wine, be able to see and believe most firmly that they are the most sacred Body and Blood of the living, true Lord." Writes Gobry, "This, indeed, is the manner that he has chosen to remain always with those who believe in him, as he himself said: 'Behold, I am with you until the consummation of the world.'"

Therefore the Eucharist is the source, the life and the summit of Christian existence, it is by the Holy Mass that we are fed by both tables.

The Eucharist does not mean that life is no long the cause of strife, the Evil One tries to blind us that Christ's sacrifice is meaningless as suffering still exists. Joesph Cardinal Ratzinger in his book "A Turning Point for Europe?" reminds us that "life is not only happiness and games: it is pain, temptation, and failure." Ratzinger reminds us of the beauty in love of the Eucharist, "and yet in all this it is beautiful if it is supported by love and possesses a hope that transcends the present moment. If we cannot show a picture of life in which even pain, hardship and death are meaningful and belong to a larger whole, then we cannot rehabilitate human existence."

In these words, Ratzinger shows us the role of the Eucharist, nay the

mission of the Church in the world that is to make present Christ in the world to reconcile and do greater things to bring about the unity of all, for the world to be consecrated to Him.

An act that Pope Francis had conferred upon the world along with the Pope Emeritus with the icon of Saint Michael in the grounds of Rome, the eternal city. The Pope Emeritus in the general audience of January 4, 2012, reminds us that the Eucharist is the summit of the Christian Church and how the Eucharist as Pope Francis says makes us the living magnificat.

“In this Christmas season, the Church celebrates the mystery of the incarnation of the Son of God and his revelation as the Saviour of the world. From the witness of Scripture and the Church’s tradition, we see that our first reaction to the birth of Jesus should be one of joy, in the knowledge that God has assumed our humanity in order to make us sharers in his own divine life.” Mary, whom from the angel Gabriel was told God’s plan for our redemption through the magnificat, contemplated the meaning. We too through “contemplation of this ‘wondrous exchange’, which we experience most powerfully in the Eucharist, invites us to recognize our lofty dignity as God’s adopted sons and daughters.” That he, as our brother in Christ died for us on the Cross, how we as Benedict writes in Jesus of Nazareth commune with Christ as family as Christ communed with God as a true and only Son. “The liturgy teaches us that Christmas is a feast of light, for Christ, the light of the world and the radiance of the Father’s glory, has brought us from darkness into his Kingdom of light and called us to bring the light of the Gospel to every creature.” And how, this wasn’t a fleeting moment, a brief existence but a continuation (as from pope to pope) the sacrifice of the spotless lamb to teach us how to Passover into perpetual light. How Christ is the true messiah, the *tikvat* (hebrew for hope), victorious over death, that God so loved the world that he gave us His Son who is truly with us in the Eucharist. That he has conquered the world and shown us the proponents of change in formation of bringing about peace in our time. “During this Christmas season, may we welcome the Newborn Saviour into our hearts and may our lives be transformed by his gifts of joy, newness and light” said the Pope Emeritus and this same big open heart to God is required to enable the light to resonate inside us and so exile the darkness that battles within our being, a battle for our very soul: therefore the saving of our soul is paramount that we commune that is be consumed and consume with love for God at the Eucharist, for one cannot save himself, he needs Jesus whom is with the Catholic Church. This also shows us how we are needed to be re-born to enter heaven, to be confirmed in the faith, to re-affirm our faith in Him so that we may live by Him and be sustained by Him in the Eucharist unto the end of our existence and the end of the world.

Blessed John Henry Cardinal Newman writes “I am a Catholic by virtue of

my believing in a God; and if I am asked why I believe in a God, I answer that it because I believe in myself, for I find it impossible to believe in my own existence (and of that fact I am quite sure) without believing also in the existence of Him, who lives as a Personal, All-seeing, All-judging Being in my conscience.” (The Heart of Newman)

“Abortion” writes Peter Kreeft, “is the anti-Christ’s demonic parody of the Eucharist. That’s why it uses the same holy words, ‘This is my body’ with the blasphemous opposite meaning.” Therefore the Eucharist is the meaning of existence, the substance, the manna that your fathers ate in the desert as we enter the tent of the Lord in the wilderness.

God loves us and just as the angels sustained Him in the garden of olives, they raise up our Eucharistic gifts so that you may fill them with every grace and blessing and your true and real presence with the choir of angels as we sing Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord, God of Hosts. And yet, St. John Vianney says that if he were to pass an angel or a priest on the road he would salute the latter because the priest holds the place of God with the priest God is truly with us.

This is the mystery of Christ, the opportunity to communion with Jesus in the real sense, “now we can ask ourselves some questions regarding the relation between the Eucharist we celebrate and our life, as Church and as individual Christians” says the Holy Father, Pope Francis. “We ask ourselves: how do we live the Eucharist? When we go to Mass on Sunday, how do we live it? Is it only a moment of celebration, a consolidated tradition, an occasion to meet with one another and feel well, or is it something more?” With these questions the Holy Father leads to an explanation of the importance of the internal disposition and not just an external disposition. That just the external appearance of holiness without the internal sacrifice of dying to self, grinding down of self, as wheat to be used in the unleavened bread of the Eucharist, is useless without the internal ingredients. These are “very concrete signs to understand how we live all this, how we live the Eucharist; signs that tell us if we live the Eucharist well or if we don’t live it too well.”

Pope Francis teaches of how through the Eucharist we are transformed on how we deal with others how “in the Eucharist Christ always acts anew the gift of Himself that he made on the Cross. His whole life was an act of total sharing of Himself out of love; that is why He loved to be with the disciples and with the people He was able to meet. For Him this meant sharing their desires, their problems, what agitated their soul and their life.”

The Pope talks of how when we participate in the mass we meet with all kinds of people how we are the Christ-light to others and challenges us to truly regard them as brothers and sisters. The Pope reminds us as the writes I mentioned before, that the disposition of the participants is of vital importance even after the mass and how gossip can kill any good from it.

The Holy Father teaches us that we must recognize we are sinners to attend mass, that this is the whole point of the mass: to recognize that Jesus died for us, for our sins, that we have forgiven ourselves and be transformed by this sacrifice that we can bring this forgiveness to others.

“‘I confess’ which we say at the beginning” teaches the Pope that “is not a ‘pro forma,’ it is a true act of penance! I am a sinner and I confess it, that is how the Mass begins!”

“We must never forget that Jesus’ Last Supper took place “on the night He was betrayed” (1 Corinthians 11:23).” The Pope again reminding us of the need to be forgiven and to forgive and goes on to say this is possible as we are “renewed every time in that bread and wine that we offer and around which we gather, is the gift of the Body and Blood of Christ for the remission of our sins. We should go to Mass humbly, as sinners and the Lord reconciles us.”

“Through the Eucharist” said the Pope, “Christ wants to enter into our existence and permeate it with His grace, so that in every Christian community there is coherence between the liturgy and life.”

I end this book with the following words from the Pope, who reminds us that “our heart is filled with confidence and hope thinking of Jesus’ words reported in John’s Gospel: ‘He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day’ (6:54).”

Therefore contemplative over what we have covered in this book, “let us live the Eucharist with a spirit of faith, of prayer, of penance, of community, joy, of concern for the needy and the needs of so many brothers and sisters, in the certainty that the Lord will fulfill what He has promised us: eternal life. May it be so!”

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Terry Lynch graduated from the University of Wales, Aberystwyth in 2008 with honours as a bachelor of social science and economics from the department of international politics. Studying the course international politics and military history, Terry covered a variety of themes; On War from Carl Von Clausewitz, Saint Thomas Aquinas' just war theology, twenty-first century warfare and others.